



Accent

An Avila University publication

SPRING 2018

Putting Her Heart on the Page

ANGELA CERVANTES '04
PAGE 6

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DEAR ALUMNI & FRIENDS,

For me

, the spring semester is a season of transformation. As we graduate more than 400 students, emboldened to make their difference in the world, a new class is discovering Avila thanks to the Avila Promise. This semester was the first opportunity new students had to enroll under our new, lower tuition rate. Transfer students enrolled in record numbers for an inspired education that costs them less, includes books and fees in their tuition and protects their tuition from unexpected hikes while they're here.

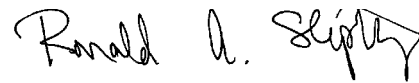
The spring semester is also a season of transformations for our faculty and staff. While we wish all of our retirees well, it's unfortunate that the class of 2022 won't experience biology through the eyes of Bob Powell, Ph.D., have the mentoring of Richard Woodall, Ph.D., Wendy Donnell, Ph.D., or Linda Strelluf, MLA, to guide them. However, what this new class will discover as they transition into college students is a campus alive with opportunities.

As a cornerstone of the Avila Promise, the class of 2022 will have a travel grant of up to \$1,000 to study outside of Kansas City.

Perhaps they'll engage with students and leaders from around the world at the United Nations, like Nicole Esquibel, MFA, and Dr. Ken Parsons' students did this year. The class of 2022 will have the opportunity to meet peace leaders like Nobel-prize nominee Rev. John Dear and William Kamkwamba, author of "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind." And with the Avila Promise, every student will have the opportunity for research or internship experiences, guaranteed.

Thank you for all that you do to make these transformative opportunities possible for all of our students. We truly couldn't do this without your support, guidance and inspiration.

Gratefully,



Ronald A. Slepitza, Ph.D., CSJA
President



As we graduate more than 400 students, emboldened to make their difference in the world, a new class is discovering Avila thanks to the Avila Promise.



Ingram's names Avila President Ronald Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA 2018 Icon of Education

Each year, *Ingram's*, a Kansas City business magazine, recognizes a class of iconic educators in Missouri and Kansas who have demonstrated exceptional leadership. This year, Avila University President Ronald Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, was honored as a 2018 Icon of Education.

Since joining the University as its 14th president in 2006, Dr. Slepitz has led a remarkable renaissance on campus. Enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs has increased from 900 to a record enrollment of nearly 2,000 students. The University's facilities have seen more new construction and renovation than at any time since breaking ground on the current campus in 1963. Avila added a new multi-sport athletic complex, an athletic pavilion, a new residence hall as well as numerous

renovations, and will break ground soon on the new Goppert Performing Arts Center. Much of this was accomplished through the University's most successful fundraising campaign, raising a total of \$43.8 million from philanthropic sources.

Dr. Slepitz will quickly attribute this success fully to the good work, energy and innovation of his leadership team and the many faculty and staff who are so devoted both to Avila's success and especially the success of its students. However, it is Dr. Slepitz who sets the direction and provides the inspiration.

"It's humbling to receive such a recognition, especially when I think about all the great people over the years who have made Avila's success possible," Slepitz said. "When you honor me, you are really recognizing our faculty, staff, alumni and supporters of Avila." 🏆

Spring Transfer Enrollment up 40%

Avila University saw its largest transfer class enroll this spring, thanks in large part to the Avila Promise. While the full benefits will be available to students enrolling in the upcoming fall semester, spring transfer students were able to take advantage of Avila's new, lower tuition price which includes books and campus fees. So far, the number of students transferring to Avila this fall is following a similar trend.

Melissa Al A'Abed is an international business and finance student who transferred to Avila this spring. She was thrilled to see the Avila Promise made available to her. "Avila had just the right program for me," Al A'Abed said. "Then I heard tuition had just been lowered by 33 percent, and it was the icing on the cake."



Announced in September 2017, the Avila Promise shifts college pricing from a high-tuition/high-discount model to a low-tuition/low-discount model; the Avila Promise is a more transparent approach to college financing. In addition to a reduced tuition price of \$19,900 (including books and campus fees), the Avila Promise is built on four cornerstones: tuition protection, four-year on-time graduation, guaranteed research or internship experience, and a travel grant of up to \$1,000.

Senior Director of Admission Bethany Bauer is encouraged by the upward trend. "The Avila Promise has leveled the playing field for many students and families," Bauer said. "There has never been a better time to refer a student to Avila." 🏆

To learn more about the Avila Promise visit www.Avila.edu/Promise.



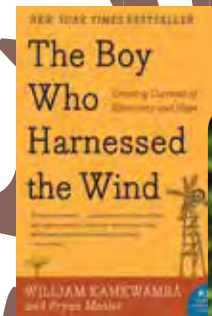
First Year Student Reflections

The First Year Experience at Avila is centered around a common reading program where freshmen and transfer students come together to examine the themes the book presents. Last fall, the selected book was Reyna Grande's "The Distance Between Us." Grande visited campus, met with students and spoke to the greater community in Goppert Theatre as the Harry S. Truman Distinguished Lecturer. At the end of the semester, students shared their experiences which were published in a collection, "Helping the Dear Neighbor: 2017 Student Reflections."

MICHAEL, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA: "As the great melting pot, we need to come together, liberal and conservative, color and non-color, donkey and elephant and figure out an exceptional and intellectual proposal that may not be perfect, but helps everyone in the long run. The people on the other side of that border are human and have struggles many of us cannot comprehend."

LONDON, RAYMORE, MISSOURI: "This lecture series has opened my eyes to how many of the opinions on my side of the wall are without good reason and sometimes immoral. The people on the other side of that border are human and have struggles many of us cannot comprehend."

TAYLOR, LEE'S SUMMIT, MISSOURI: "The project has helped me explore the issues on immigration ... It has inspired me to want to help and to get more involved." 🗣️



Save the Date: October 24

2018 Harry S. Truman Distinguished Lecture Series

The 2018 common reading selection for first-year students is the book "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind," by William Kamkwamba. It's the remarkable autobiography about human inventiveness and its power to overcome crippling adversity. Kamkwamba will speak to the Avila community on October 24 on the Bill and Jean Buchanan Stage in Goppert Theatre. 🗣️



It is our duty to take
in those without safe
havens, to care for those
without caregivers, and
to love those who do
not know love.

RACHEL, NEW LONDON, MISSOURI



Avila Salutes

Retiring Faculty & Staff



WENDY DONNELL, Ph.D. – 8 years

Wendy Donnell, Ph.D., is an expert in literacy acquisition, with emphasis on culturally and linguistically diverse students. She came to Avila after 30 years in public schools. At Avila she participated as an invited team member of an international reading research group investigating literacy in Cuba, and has also represented the University in local, national and international literacy conferences as invited guest and facilitator/presenter. Recently Dr. Donnell has worked on special literacy projects with the Office of the Mayor of Kansas City, Missouri, and the Office of the Superintendent of Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools.

LOUISE HATCHER – 6 years

Louise Hatcher provided administrative services to the finance and human resource

offices for six years prior to her retirement in January. Hatcher did not hesitate to tackle any assignment and research the information necessary to complete a project. One of the first people a new employee would interact with, her quiet and confidential manner was an asset.



JANET MCMANUS – 12 years

Janet McManus has been with Avila University for 12 years as the human resources director. During her tenure, she advanced the campus in many ways, including developing performance evaluations, formalizing job descriptions, implementing numerous wellness initiatives, providing leadership in Title IX compliance activities and managing and expanding the University's benefit programs.



I believe deeply in the concept that students learn best about science by doing science ... getting your hands dirty goes beyond the need to address a particular learning style, real questions must be asked, realistic solutions offered and students must have a chance to choose from options based on their own experiences.

Robert Powell, Ph.D.,
professor of biology



BOB POWELL, Ph.D. – 46 years

Robert Powell, Ph.D., professor of biology, retires at the end of the 2017-18 academic year, after an incredible 46 years at Avila. Throughout the years, Dr. Powell has inspired many students in the conducting of research on amphibians and reptiles. Dr. Powell has been a true scholar and his list of publications is impressive – hundreds of books, articles and other publications. His prolific scholarship led to being awarded the Avila Distinguished Scholar Award in 2007 and 2014. Additionally, he was distinguished by describing (with Robert W. Henderson) and naming a new species of lizard, *Gonatodes Daudini*, or the Union Island Clawed Gecko. He also was honored by having a species of lizard named after him, *Spondylurus Powellii*, the Anguilla Bank Skink.

“Effective teaching must be multi-faceted,” said Powell. “I have had the opportunity over the years and in a variety of settings to explore many methods and techniques. Some are suitable only with the small class sizes I typically encounter at Avila, but many are applicable in any situation.”

Dr. Powell will be remembered for his hands-on approach with students. “I believe deeply in the concept that students learn best about science by doing science,” he said. “Getting your hands dirty goes beyond the need to address a particular learning style, real questions must be asked, realistic solutions offered and students must have a chance to choose from options based on their own experiences.”



LINDA STRELLUF, MLA – 18 years

Linda Strelluf, MLA, associate professor of communication, joined Avila in 2006. During her tenure, Strelluf was instrumental in leading communication students in projects that won awards at the regional, national and international levels. In addition to her work with students, Strelluf has been involved in multiple committees on campus, including the budget committee, the technology committee, the curriculum committee, the rank and tenure committee, faculty scholarship committee and many others. She also mentored three winning Student Scholar Day entrants and was the advisor for the International Association of Business Communicators.



DEBBIE THORNTON – 13 years

“Ms. Debbie” was the Avila campus mom for more than 13 years. A strong supporter for students, she helped every student she met.

Thornton is a CSJA and her connection to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet shines through her interactions with the dear neighbor. An Avila Medal of Honor recipient in 2016, she had a variety of roles at Avila and was a valued member of the Student Development team and a key member of the student recognition committee.



RICHARD WOODALL, Ph.D. – 23 years

Richard Woodall, Ph.D., retires from Avila as a professor of economics and business after 23 years. Dr. Woodall was hired in 1994 to chair the business and economics department. As dean of the School of Business, Dr. Woodall enhanced and led the business faculty and our students and was responsible for achieving IACBE business accreditation for the University. He has been a member of many Avila committees, most significantly the budget committee. In 2016, Dr. Woodall designated and brought together a mix of Avila alumni and other business professionals to form the Avila School of Business Advisory Board. 📌

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A GIFT
IN HONOR OF OUR RETIREES, PLEASE VISIT
www.Avila.edu/RetireeTribute.



Angela so clearly demonstrated the mission and values of Avila University. She volunteered as a youth minister in her diocese. She worked at Hope House. So she already had the Avila values within her ...

Wendy Acker '88, Ph.D., interim dean of the School of Business



Angela Cervantes '04: Fulfilling Her Dream

From Avila MBA to Successful Children's Author

Since childhood, Angela Cervantes '04, had longed to write books for children. It was her MBA from Avila that gave her the entrepreneurial tools to pursue her dream and propel her to the success she experiences today.

"I will always remember my graduate admissions counselor, Dr. Wendy Acker," Cervantes said. Wendy Acker '88, Ph.D., is now interim dean of the School of Business. "She was so welcoming, and she was genuinely concerned with my success. She was just wonderful, and honestly, Dr. Acker is the reason I finally chose Avila. She made me feel that I could do it."

Cervantes' MBA was vital in preparing her to be a solo entrepreneur. "I remember Angela had a wide range of service experiences when she arrived at Avila," Acker said. "Angela so clearly demonstrated the mission and values of Avila University. She volunteered as a youth minister in her diocese. She worked at Hope House. So she already had the Avila values within her, which was wonderful, and we reinforced those traits while she was here."

"It's funny to think of my writing career as entrepreneurial," Cervantes said, "but that's what it is. I knew how to write books, but my MBA is what set me up for business success."

After Avila, Cervantes spent 12 years in creative communications at Children International, a Kansas City-based nonprofit dedicated to serving children around the world and helping them break free from poverty. "I had the great opportunity to travel around the world while working for Children International," Cervantes said. "I saw immense poverty, so many children that needed help."

Today, Cervantes is a renowned author of books for middle school-aged children, with four Scholastic-published books and a Disney film novelization. Her first book was published in 2014, and she hasn't looked back. She is the author of "Gaby, Lost and Found," "Allie, First and Last," and "Me, Frida, and the Secret of the Peacock Ring." In 2017, Disney/Pixar released the hugely successful film, "Coco," and Cervantes was asked to write the junior novelization. "I was thrilled.

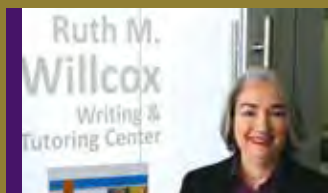
The request to write 'Coco' did not come through my agent or through my publishing company," she said. "They contacted me directly, so that was a real thrill."

"Our MBA degree was created for students exactly like Angela," Acker said. "She had a non-business bachelor's degree, but needed to know all of the functional areas of business. No doubt, this has served her entrepreneurial spirit well, as an author and being in business for herself. She now combines her passions for writing, travel and children with the business savvy to succeed."

Social justice themes can often be found in Cervantes' books. In "Gaby, Lost and Found," the central character's mother is deported from America back to Honduras. "That backstory is based on a real mom that I met while working with Children International," Cervantes said. "The woman told me of her goal to eventually get back to Michigan, to her children. I remember praying for social justice and wanting to help her in some way."

"Later, when 'Gaby' was published, I always wondered if that mother ever made it back to Michigan," she said. Cervantes paused, wondered silently for a moment, then continued, "I secretly hoped that maybe she would one day read 'Gaby, Lost and Found,' remember meeting me in Honduras, and realize Gaby's mother was based on her story."

Cervantes, who is married and lives in Shawnee, Kansas, spends a good deal of time at speaking engagements and book signings. "I get letters from kids all the time, and I just love meeting them when I am on the road. It's very gratifying to know that I'm reaching so many young people, that my books are connecting," she said. "This is exactly what I always wanted to do." 📖



Being able to communicate through writing is a critical skill for

college students. The Writing Center and the writing fellows serve students on-campus from their space in the Hookey-Bundscho Library and Learning Commons.

As an initiative led by the department of English faculty and staffed by English majors who serve as writing fellows, the Writing Center assists at

all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming and organizing to final edits. "English faculty train the fellows and tutors on effective Writing Center practices to help students not merely produce a better paper, but to become better writers overall," said Amy Milakovic, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the department of English. 📖


Partnership Offers MSW

Avila University and Saint Louis University (SLU) have partnered to offer an innovative Master of Social Work (MSW) program to students in the Kansas City metro area beginning in the fall of 2018.

Taught in a hybrid model, approximately 60 percent of the classes are online through SLU while the remainder of the courses are available in a face-to-face format at Avila University, including the practicum planning and seminar courses.

Students who complete the program will earn a degree from Saint Louis University which is recognized as a leader in social work education and is ranked in the top 20% of programs in the United States by U.S. News and World Report.

This partnership program utilizes a “4+1” approach, allowing for a four-year bachelor’s degree in social work from Avila and a one-year master’s degree from SLU. Avila students who have graduated with a BSW in the last five years can obtain their MSW in just one additional year.

If you’re interested in the program, please contact Francis Origanti, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Avila department of social work, at socialwork@avila.edu or 816.501.3647 for more information. 



Faculty News



Malcolm Gold, Ph.D., assistant professor of economics, and his co-authors recently presented the results of a study called “Effects of Landscape Scale Burn Frequency and Invasive Species on Abundance of Grassland Birds in the Flint Hills” at the Kansas Natural Resource Conference in Manhattan, Kansas, as part of the 2017 Chickadee Checkoff Program focused on the Kansas Statewide Wildlife Action Plan.




Karin Gastreich, Ph.D., chair and associate professor of biology, took first place at the 2017 OZMA Awards, a division of Chanticleer Reviews’ International Book Awards for her third non-fiction book, “The Daughter of Aithne.” Winners were announced at the awards banquet at Chanticleer’s annual author’s conference in Bellingham, Washington, on April 21, 2018.



Nicole Esquibel, MFA, dean and associate professor, will continue touring Colorado to showcase her documentary, “Jamás Olvidados” (Never Forgotten), that tells the story of Neva Romero, 21, and five other Chicano activists killed in two car bombs within a 48-hour period in May 1974 in Boulder, Colorado.



Nilufer Guler, Ph.D., assistant professor of education, will be presenting at the TESOL Convention in Chicago, on the topic of STEM education and ELL students. She will also be presenting at the NCTE Convention in St. Louis. Her presentation is titled “Critical Literacy: Engaging Children in Quality Picture Books and Igniting Political Work through Stories.” 

The Power to Create *Change*

Avila Students Attend United Nations Conference



“If you were to ask

me the biggest takeaway from my week at the United Nations,” Avila junior Brianna Peralta said, “it would be that I have the power to create change, and it’s up to me how I use that power.”

Peralta is one of 12 Avila students who travelled to the U.N., joining other students from around the world in one of the year’s biggest and most important town halls: Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Sponsored by the Congregations of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the students were accompanied by faculty members Nicole Esquibel, MFA, associate professor and dean of the School of Visual and Communication Arts, and Ken Parsons, Ph.D., associate professor of philosophy and director of the Center for Global Studies and Social Justice. Esquibel was also a presenter in a special session on gender equity.

The trip was part of “IS-358 Violence,” a multidisciplinary class (two disciplines and two professors) focusing on the issues of violence and power.

“As an African-American woman, I felt heard,” junior Zaria Dukes said. “The speakers brought hope and I feel strengthened to continue my activism in the area of climate change and racial justice issues.”

Students ended the semester by compiling an e-portfolio of papers, interviews and short films centered on the social justice issue of violence and how it can be revealed through film.

“I can honestly say this experience was something that has changed and opened my worldview,” Peralta said. “I met and talked with so many amazing people from around the world about how we can empower women to be at their fullest potential. That’s who my final project is dedicated to, the women who inspired me to be better, to break the rules, rebel a little and use my voice.” 🗣️

Events That Inspire

1. Bill and Jean '76, Buchanan, generous supporters and champions of Avila University, received the honorary doctorate of letters at the 2018 commencement ceremony from President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA.

Together they established the Buchanan Initiative for Peace and Nonviolence at Avila University, which continues Jean's personal mission to utilize peace and nonviolence to connect individual's sense of inner-peace more broadly to peace on a global level. Bill is serving as a mentor to a student from Avila's School of Business, and both he and Jean are serving as co-chairs of The Promise Campaign, and are supporters of the new Goppert Performing Arts Center. The stage in the Goppert Theatre is named in their honor.

2. Rev. John Dear Applauds and Challenges Avila

"There is nothing like the Buchanan Initiative at any other university in the country," said Rev. John Dear at a campus lecture and book signing sponsored by the Buchanan Initiative for Peace and Nonviolence at Avila University. "There are peace programs at a lot of universities, but no one is teaching peace like you are at Avila. And I applaud you."

Rev. John Dear is a Catholic priest, a multi-Nobel Peace Prize nominee and the author of "They Will Inherit the Earth: Peace and Nonviolence in a Time of Climate Change."

"What I want to invite you to [do is] reflect on peace and justice and all the good things you are doing here at Avila," said Rev. Dear. "How can we be more and more like the people Martin [Luther King, Jr.] was calling us to be? ... That's the greatest thing I think we can do with our lives."

3. Career and Internship Fair a Success Avila University hosted a career and internship fair for approximately 350 Avila students and Kansas City community members. "We're thrilled to host nearly 50 of the top companies and non-profits in Kansas City," said Jamie McConnell, director of graduate admission at Avila. "Avila Career Services also provided assistance with resume building, career coaching and professional headshots. With events like this, we're providing students with opportunities to grow professionally as part of the Avila Promise." 📖






2



Serving the Dear Neighbor

In April, more than 155 Avila students, faculty, staff members, alumni and friends continued the tradition of service to the community during the fifth annual Dear Neighbor Day. The Avila family worked with 18 non-profit organizations across Kansas City, including Boys Hope Girls Hope, Kansas City Hospice, St. James Parish, Don Bosco Senior Center and Hope Faith Ministries. 

Fifth Straight



The girls really wanted to show that they belonged. Winning a fifth consecutive championship was very important to our seniors, and it's a huge accomplishment. They can now graduate knowing that they never once lost in the conference championship. That's really special.

Cindy Freeman, dance head coach

The Glitter Girls dance team made history in February, winning a record fifth consecutive Heart of America Athletic Conference Competitive Dance Championship. The seniors on the squad (Lauren Hopper, Katlin Huskey, Jodi Johnson, Keirsten Ludwig, Shaelyn Matkins, Haley Pickert and Amber Woods) will forever be known as undefeated in the Heart.

"The girls really wanted to show that they belonged," Coach Cindy Freeman said. "Winning a fifth consecutive championship was very important to our seniors, and it's a huge accomplishment. They can now graduate knowing that they never once lost in the conference championship. That's really special."

After placing first in the preliminary round, the Glitter Girls captured the conference title again in the finals, claiming the championship by just 4.7 points over the second place finisher, host Grand View University.

At the same competition, Pickert, Woods, Matkins, Ludwig, Huskey and J'mia Cheadle were named to the 2018 All-Conference Dance Team. 🏆



Katie LaForge Named Women's Soccer Head Coach

Avila University has named Katie LaForge as the women's soccer head coach. The top assistant at Kansas City Kansas Community College last season, LaForge brings a wealth of knowledge from a storied soccer career that she began at St. Teresa's Academy in Kansas City, Missouri.

Kelly helped lead St. Teresa's to three Missouri state championships before attending Marquette University. There she was named to the NCAA All-America Second Team as a senior in 2008. After college, LaForge played professionally for six seasons all over the world, including for teams in Sweden, Germany and Finland. She spent one season with FC Kansas City in 2013.

"I have been very blessed to play for as long as I did at the professional level. I've had many different

coaches who imprinted on me their coaching style, tactics and overall philosophy," LaForge said. "My experiences as a player have helped me stay diligent and open minded no matter the situation, and I plan to take all those lessons and use them to make Avila the best program it can be."

LaForge continues an Avila athletics legacy started by her parents. Her father, Neil Kelly '85, played for the soccer program from 1981-85. He was a member of the 1982 men's soccer team that won the program's first NAIA District 16 Championship and placed fourth at the NAIA National Championships, finishing with an 18-5-1 record. LaForge's mother, Shelley Kelly '87, competed in tennis for Avila and is now on the University's Board of Counselors. 🏆

Softball Champions



With a program record 37 wins, the 2017 Avila softball team was honored with Heart of America Athletic Conference Tournament Championship rings in January.

"I'm very happy for this group and for everything they were able to accomplish

together," Head Coach Samantha Honeycutt said. "Every single one of them contributed to the team's success and they were able to overcome some big obstacles in big moments to reach their goals. Ceremonies like this are a good way to honor them for their hard work

and put a bow on a successful season as we prepare to move on to the 2018 season."

Winning the Heart conference tournament sent the Eagles to the NAIA World Series Opening Round with an automatic bid. This was the second time in three seasons the Eagles made it into the World Series. Win number 37 came in the team's second game against host Vanguard University. It was the program's first-ever victory in opening round play. 🏆



Check out your Eagles on Avila's Athletics website at AvilaAthletics.com.




Avila University's 42nd annual Steer Dinner & Auction



For the fourth year

in a row, Avila University raised more than \$1 million for student scholarships at the Steer Dinner & Auction. More than 660 guests and student volunteers attended the 42nd annual Steer Dinner & Auction on February 3, 2018, at the

Kansas City Marriott Downtown in the Muehlebach Tower. This year's Steer Dinner was led by Honorary Chairs Cathy Nigro and Suzie Walti of the Roderick J. and Jo Anne Cyr Foundation and DJ and Ann O'Hare, and Event Chairs Rodd and Martha '66 Staker. View more Steer photos at www.Avila.edu/Steer. 



A "Taste" for Chemistry



“Chemistry gets a bad reputation, largely because students had bad first experiences,” said Joe Roberts, Ph.D., assistant professor of chemistry and chair of physical science. That’s not the case in Dr. Roberts’ Chemistry of Brewing class. “Beer hooks students’ interest, which allows me to teach brewing, offer beer tastings and sneak in some specific and applied chemistry.” At the end of the semester, the upper-level students showed off the fruits of their labors at a beer tasting event with more than 100 alumni and friends. 🍺

Top row: Cortney Patterson and Karyn Brooke, of floral sponsor Sidelines Custom Floral; Honorary Chairs DJ and Ann O’Hare, Bishop James V. Johnston, Jr., Event Chairs Rodd & Martha ‘66 Staker, Lorie Nigro, Honorary Chairs Suzie Walti and Cathy Nigro of the Roderick J. and Jo Anne Cyr Foundation, President Ron Slepitzka, Ph.D., Suzanne Slepitzka and Master of Ceremonies Steven Albritton from KMBC Channel 9

Center row: Dan and Karen Staker with Martha ‘66 and Rodd Staker; Tom and Virginia ‘58 Coppinger with Connie and Kevin Fahey

Bottom row: Kevin ‘05 and Cassi ‘05 Furderer; Mary and David ‘76 Kerr, chairman of the Board of Trustees; Student speaker Emmaline Cochrane; Mark, of presenting sponsor Country Club Bank, and Amy Thompson with Cassidy Goodman and Collin Thompson



2018 Jeanne Collins Thompson '54 Ariston Award

Each year, Avila recognizes one outstanding member of the senior class who best represents the mission, values and characteristics of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet. The Ariston Award is named after 1954 Avila graduate Jeanne Collins Thompson. This year's recipient was radiologic science major Mia Rosinski, who was recognized at a luncheon on May 4 with President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, and previous Ariston recipients. 🏆

FOOTBALL REUNION: The annual football reunion was held in May where former football players and alumni competed in a friendly game of flag football. **Back row (from L to R):** Josh Lohkamp '12, Tyler Cardwell '12, Toby Cashell '10, Jake Zinn '11, Trevor Lewis, Tim Gilday '13, Don Kiser '13, Tim Mincher '10, Colton Bourland '14, Joe Sublette '16, Juan Salazar '17, Robert Johnson, Antonio Love, Bill Firn '08, DeMonte McClary, Marc Benevidez '12, Ty Larson **Front row (from L to R):** Victor Gray '09, Khalid Abdulqaadir '13, Mike Pepple '12, '13, Adam Mattison '12, Jacob Rhoades '15, Chuck Davis '12, Cole Muder, MJ Bland '12, Chris Boyer

SOCCKER REUNION: Soccer alumni came back to campus to scrimmage against the current teams. Following the games, they headed over to Southside Bar & Grille to continue socializing.

Back row (from L to R): Stephanie Gartner '14, Tracie McNair '14, Stacey Schimmel, Emily Volker '14, Haley Gatts '16, Melanie Southworth '16 **Front row (from L to R):** Alyssa Parsells '17, Caryn Welch '15, Caroline Hayes '17, Cristina Cowan '10, '15, Jodi Hellebusch '16, Amy Anderson '16

Back row (from L to R): Zach Herzig '14, Head Coach Stephen Hoffman '12, Kyle Lowe '15, Richie Lane '18, Aaron Burrow '17, Mike Hufker '16, Vinicius Pendeo, Brandon Brewster '18, Erik Rivera '17, Robbie Beckert '14, John McNair '15, Eddie Villegas '02

Front row (from L to R): Cody Jeffrey '17, Javier Palermo Tobar, Daniel Gray, Daniel Galley, Jacob Denney '17, Louis Gallagher '17, Joey Lipoff, Brock Hanson '18, Robert Hayes '13, '15, Neil Kelly '85, Tyler Barr '02, Joseph Allen '15

Reunions

Football & soccer alumni: Mark your calendars for next year's reunions on Saturday, May 4, 2019.



CLASS NOTES



'01 ANNE (WARIS) ALEXIOU and her husband, Matt, owners of Southside Bar & Grille, appeared on KC Live on January 25 with Chef Jasper J. Mirabile, Jr., of Jasper's Italian Restaurant, for the 103rd Street Meatball Throwdown.

'58 VIRGINIA (KOPP) COPPINGER served on the auction committee for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'62 S. BARBARA MOORE, CSJ, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award for promoting Christian spiritual formation and leadership development within the African-American Catholic community. Moore was honored by the St. Charles Lwanga Center in St. Louis.

'66 MARTHA (LEAHY) STAKER and husband, Rodd, served as event chairs for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'66 JULIE TROTTER served on the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction patrons committee.

'72 MICHELE KERWIN served on the auction committee for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'72 CATHY (FICK) MCDANIEL served on the auction committee for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'72 HELEN (DAVIES) SWETALA served on the auction committee for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'72 ANN (OTT) VENTRILLO served as the co-chair of the auction committee for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'73 MARTY KARIGAN-WINTER retired as a registered nurse after 41 1/2 years. She is currently living on a farm of 90 acres in northwest Arkansas, raising a garden, animals and helping with her two grandchildren, both two years old.

'76 CHRISTINA GIUNCHIGLIANI is running for governor of Nevada.

'78 '86 DR. BRENDA (KERN) PRINCE retired from medicine after 24 1/2 years.

'84 IBRAHEEM BADEJO, PH.D., recently joined the Avila University Board of Trustees.

'88 BELINDA TROXLER served on the auction committee for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'89 JOHN BALDWIN recently became the transfer agent for Spring Venture Group.

'92 COLETTE BLACK recently accepted the position of director of the Samuel U. Rodgers Foundation.

'95 TIM O'BRIEN recently joined the Avila University Board of Trustees.

'96 TIM AYERS was recently promoted to senior director, supply chain at Assurant Solutions.

'98 MARCIA KENLEY served on the auction committee for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'98 ANNA-LISA (CRISWELL) TUCKER and husband, Stephen, met while attending classes at then Avila College. The couple recently celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary by visiting Avila, Spain.

'99 AMY CAMERON, a teacher at Grandview High School, was accepted to the 2017 Peace Teachers Program at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP). Cameron was selected for this program because of her proven commitment to and success in teaching about global issues of conflict and peace. Each year, the Peace Teachers Program selects four outstanding American middle and high school educators to receive training, resources and support to strengthen their teaching of peace. USIP is an independent national institute, founded by Congress and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical and essential for U.S. and global security.

'00 TRICIA (DALY) LYON served as the ambiance chair for the 2018 Annual Steer Dinner & Auction.

'00 LAURA (VORHIES) STEINMETZ recently became the nurse coordinator otolaryngology at Washington University in St. Louis.

'00 AMY YOUNG served as the marketing chair for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'01 SAYRA (PLAYER) BRODIE was recently announced as the co-artistic

director for The Collective NY. The Collective NY unites professional artists who share a responsibility to create work in the contemporary American Theatre that is emotionally truthful, socially relevant and defiantly accessible.

'02 ELIZABETH (KEEHART) BERTANI welcomed a son, Jack Anthony, on October 12, 2017. Jack weighed seven pounds and 12.5 ounces.

'02 LIZ DONNELLY retired from Truman Medical Center in October 2012. She worked more than 14 years as an education coordinator in surgery administration. In this position, Donnelly primarily worked with medical students completing surgery rotations. Prior to this, Donnelly, who was registered in both radiology and radiation therapy, worked in several hospitals and outpatient settings. She is enjoying time with family, reading and with her volunteer efforts.

'03 TIM GREENWELL recently received the National PTA's Life Achievement Award, the highest honor given to PTA members



and leaders. The National PTA Life Achievement Award recognizes a person who lives out his or her commitment to children on a daily basis and tirelessly advocates for children's education, health and well-

being. Greenwell is a principal in Lewisville Independent School District in Texas.

'04 DAVE MADEO started Tilli, LLC, in May 2014. After selling medical devices for over a decade, Madeo created Tilli; Tilli has been aligning with businesses with a precise focus on culture building. Tailor making affordable, reliable programs, Tilli has partnered with more than 40 companies, including universities, and is continuing to grow regionally and nationally.

'05 KATIE FARR recently became the head coach of women's basketball at Eastside Catholic School in Sammamish, Washington.



'07 **LAUREN ANN MCCARTHY** married Ross Vincent Scimeca on February 17, 2018, at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. The couple resides in Kansas City, Missouri.

'05 **REBECCA SMITH** recently welcomed her fifth child, Robin Gabriel.

'06 **MARIE BALDWIN**, digital designer at Trozzolo Communications, was recently awarded Halls Kansas City agency of record. Baldwin's design team will be in charge of digital and social media strategy for this iconic KC business.

'06 **EMILY (EAGAN) DIETZ** welcomed her third child, daughter Millie Hazel on June 7, 2017. Millie joined big brother JJ, four, and big sister, Shaylee, three.



'07 **LEONARD CASEY** and wife, Tamara, recently started a new photo booth company, Gift of Expression Photo Booth.

'07 **TIFFANY (SWAN) POTERBIN** opened her own chiropractic center, the Kansas City Family Chiropractic Center in Martin City, Missouri, in February 2018.



'08 **AMANDA (JORDAN) ENLOE** welcomed her first child, Sylvia Hope, on January 18, 2018.



'08 **ERIN AND '08 CHADD RIVERA** welcomed their second child, Chloë Monroe, on February 20, 2018. Chloe weighed nine pounds three ounces, and was 20 3/4 inches.



'09 **LISA (BURKS) ALIZADEH** and husband, Reza, welcomed their first child, Nima Chick, on December 28, 2017.

'09 **EMILY HOSKINS** recently became the outreach coordinator for Northwest Colorado Council of Governments.

'10 **DANYELLE (CROWLEY) MCDOWELL** married Brad McDowell on December 16, 2017.



'10 **EMILEE (BILYEU) REHLING** served as the young alumni chair for the 2018 Steer Dinner & Auction.

'11 **ROBERTO CAMACHO**, of Whiskey Design design agency, earned a gold "ADDY" at the 2018 American Advertising Awards, celebrating the best in Kansas City advertising and design.

'12 **ABDULLAH ALSHADDI** recently started working at The Royal Court, "Saudi White House", in Saudi Arabia.

'12 **LISA (LASHER) POPELKA** and husband, Aaron, welcomed son, Thomas Breese, on October 17, 2017.

'12 **MICHELLE (TAYLOR) PULIDO** welcomed a son, Miliano (Milz) Isaac, on October 18, 2017.

'13 **ERIN (PENNEY) BOJE** married Kit Boje on April 21, 2017, at the Weston Red Barn Farm in Weston, Missouri.



'13 **MICAH HAIR**, of MBB Agency, earned a gold "ADDY" at the 2018 American Advertising Awards, celebrating the best in Kansas City advertising and design.

'13 **JENNIPHER HAWKINS** is in her second year practicing criminal law, helping the public defender system by taking on cases from traffic tickets to homicide. She and her husband both assist with the Blue Springs High School Mock Trial Team, and love volunteering their time with the UMKC School of Law Trial Teams by judging at practices and competitions. She is very active in the Association for Women Lawyers and routinely volunteers her time with various causes through this group.

'14 **RACHEL (BEARD) BOYDSTUN** married Dr. Kent Boydstun II on May 20, 2017. The couple resides in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

'14 **JOHN BRADISH AND '13 EMILY (FRIEDRICH) BRADISH** were united in marriage on April 14, 2018, in Kansas City, Missouri.

'14 **STACY MAYS** recently accepted the position as therapist at The Trinity Group of Kansas City.

'14 **JENNIFER (LAYTON) PRODEHL** married Philip Prodehl on February 15, 2016. They live on a farm and create antique style crafts, wood burnt pictures and designs, and jewelry. In January of 2017, Jennifer had a stroke; Philip has been by her side giving her care and motivation.

'14 **REBECCA YOUNKER** is now a sales coordinator at the Embassy Suites by Hilton in downtown historic Savannah, Georgia.



'15 LAURA (WATSON) KING and husband, '13 RYAN, welcomed their first child, James Russell, on January 4, 2018. James weighed six pounds and 15 ounces.

'15 ANDREA BLUHM and husband, Randy, welcomed their second son, Bode, on November 13, 2017. Bode weighed seven pounds and 14 ounces, and joins big brother, Graham.

'15 ALEXANDRIA COX recently accepted the position account development representative at FireMon.



'15 SARAH MCMILIAN is going to start the family nurse practitioner program at Research College of Nursing.

'15 VINCENT SAVIANO and wife, Ashley, are expecting their first child in May. The couple are moving to Nebraska.

'16 ROBERT GLORIA recently accepted the position of financial analyst with Murphy-Hoffman Company in Kansas City, Missouri.

'16 KAYLA GRIESHABER accepted a position as traveling pediatric nurse and has moved to North Carolina.

'16 SHEILA HARPER was recently promoted to RN quality coordinator at Osceola Regional Medical Center in Florida.

'16 HANNAH (STEWART) MARCHAND married Curtis Marchand on October 28, 2017, in Kansas City, Missouri.



'17 COREY (COCHRAN) GONZALES was married to David Gonzales on February 9, 2018. The couple live in Topeka, Kansas, where Corey works as a nurse at Stormont Vail Health.

BRANSEN IRELAND attended Avila University in 2010 and recently performed on the TV show, The Voice.

Stay Connected

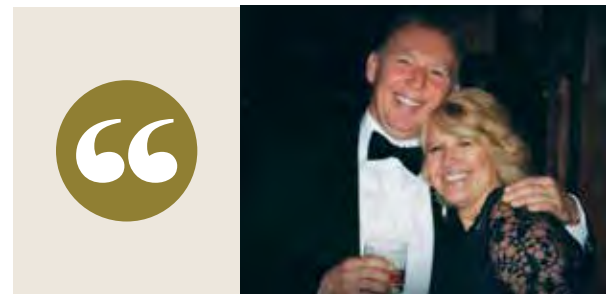
We want to hear from you! Job promotion, new baby, recent travels or new home? Let us know so we can share your good news! Email your news to alumni@avila.edu or complete the *What's New With You* form at Avila.edu/Alumni.



Alumni Association

Alumni Sweethearts

Some alumni who met their significant other at Avila shared their story with us. Read more alumni sweetheart stories on the Avila University Alumni Association Facebook page. (Look for the album posted on Valentine's Day.)



My husband Neil and I met at Avila College in 1981! He came from Toronto, Canada, to play soccer and I grew up here and played tennis (yes, we used to have a tennis team). Married in 1985. Have four incredible kids and a pretty awesome son-in-law. Our daughter is now coaching the women's soccer team at AU! Go (Avalanche) Eagles! Shelley Kelly '87



We met at Avila; Neftali played baseball and Nigel was on the basketball team. We currently live in Phoenix, and have two beautiful daughters, Omni (two years old) and Oaklie (nine months old). Neftali '08 & Nigel '08 Lizarraga



In Memoriam

'38 MARY (WEST) DYER passed away on November 26, 2017. Dyer received her associate's degree from St. Teresa's College.

'48 DOLORES (WATERS) FLEMING passed away on March 14, 2018. Fleming attended the College of St. Teresa.

'48 MARY ANN (MILLER) HENSE passed away on February 22, 2018. Hense received her Bachelor of Arts in English from the College of St. Teresa.

'48 MARY (HOFER) JORDAN passed away on February 3, 2018. Jordan received her bachelor's degree in home economics from the College of St. Teresa.

'48 JOSEPHINE (TIDONA) PRIVITERA passed away on February 12, 2018. Privitera attended the College of St. Teresa.

'51 MARY (DWYER) ALEXANDER passed away on February 20, 2018. Alexander received her Bachelor of Arts in sociology from the College of St. Teresa.

'52 MARY (RYAN) MEINERS passed away on October 25, 2017. Meiners attended the College of St. Teresa.

'53 HARRYETTE (KENNAELY) LOSCHKE passed away on December 20, 2017. Loschke received her bachelor's degree in home economics from the College of St. Teresa.

'54 BEVERLY (MELLER) CHERRITO passed away on March 3, 2018. Cherrito received her bachelor's degree in music from the College of St. Teresa.

'56 ROSEMARY (MENSE) GOERKE passed away on February 12, 2018. Goerke received her bachelor's degree in English from the College of St. Teresa.

'59 PATRICIA O'BRIEN passed away on November 26, 2017. O'Brien received her bachelor's degree in biology from the College of St. Teresa.

'63 REGINA (CARRIGAN) HOWARD passed away on January 1, 2018. Howard received her bachelor's degree in English from the College of St. Teresa.

'73 JEANNE (SCHMIDT) ZAGORAC passed away on December 14, 2017. Zagorac received her Bachelor of Science in nursing from Avila College.

'74 JO RAGUSA passed away on January 14, 2018. Ragusa received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Avila College.

'77 LINDA (HALLING) CHAMBERS passed away on February 9, 2018. Chambers received her Bachelor of Science in nursing from Avila College.

'78 GERALDINE (WELCH) SCANLON passed away on October 12, 2017. Scanlon received her bachelor's degree in medical technology from Avila College.

'79 TIM HUDNALL passed away on November 22, 2017. Hudnall received his bachelor's degree in marketing from Avila College.

'81 ROBIN WALSH passed away on March 13, 2018. Walsh received her bachelor's degree in legal assistant from Avila College.

'84 ROBERT MICCO passed away on January 12, 2018. Micco received his bachelor's degree in administration of justice from Avila College.

'95 TAMARA TUCKER passed away on January 19, 2018. Tucker received her bachelor's degree in social work from Avila College.

'96 CAROL (BRYANT) PATTERSON passed away on September 25, 2017. Patterson received her bachelor's degree in history from Avila College.

'05 THOMAS HALL passed away on December 31, 2017. Hall received his master's degree in education from Avila University.

To make a gift in memory of your loved one,
please visit Avila.edu/Donate or call 816.501.3602.



Avila Heritage Society

Jeremy Lillig '03, CSJA

“We have lost the sense of things that are bigger than ourselves,” Jeremy Lillig '03, CSJA, said. “I understand that endowments help sustain us. Planned giving and the Avila Heritage Society are ways to do that. It’s very important to me.”

Raised in the Kansas City area, Lillig comes from a deeply-rooted Catholic family. His family is one of the founding families of Redemptorist Parish, and he was a student at Our Lady of Lourdes School and Bishop O’Hara High School. “It was Avila’s sense of community and hospitality that drew me to choosing Avila as my college,” Lillig said. “I had been educated by the Sisters of St. Joseph, and at Avila, it just felt like I belonged there.” After graduating from Avila with a theatre degree, he worked briefly in a filmmaking studio and then at a bank. He even founded his own theatre company, Full Circle Theatre.

Then Lillig returned to Avila where he briefly worked in the Office of Marketing and Communications before accepting a job in the University’s development office. It was there he formed a great admiration for (and was mentored under) S. Olive Louise Dallavis, CSJ. “Sister Olive was amazing,” Lillig said. “She set me on the path that is my career today. I owe her a great deal of gratitude.”

Now at the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese, Lillig serves as director of stewardship and development, executive director of the Bright Futures Fund, executive director of the Endowment Trust Fund for Catholic Education, and executive director of the Catholic Community Foundation. Lillig also serves as vice president of advancement for St. Michael the Archangel, the newest Catholic high school in Jackson County, Missouri. Jeremy excels in his multiple roles, so much so, that

he was recently named the Emerging Non-profit Professional of the year by Nonprofit Connect.

With his philanthropic spirit it comes as no surprise that Jeremy became a member of the Avila Heritage Society at a young age. Lillig purchased a life insurance policy to give to charity, and decided to make his planned gift to Avila. “It was a celebration of heritage for me,” Lillig said.

Lillig’s gift to the Avila Heritage Society, and other gifts like his, inspire future generations of Avila students to grow in their faith and service to the dear neighbor. 🙏

Securing Avila’s Heritage

The Heritage Society was established in 1988 to recognize the remarkable contributions of Avila alumni and friends who have made provisions in their estate plans or lifetime planned gifts to support the future needs of the University. Such provisions may include:

- Bequests through wills and trusts
- Charitable remainder or lead trusts
- Appreciated securities
- Real estate and life estates in homes
- Gift annuities
- Life insurance policies

To find out more about joining Avila’s Heritage Society or the gift vehicles above, please contact JT Cattle, director of development, at 816.501.3696 or JT.Cattle@avila.edu.

Est. 1916

AU
Gold

*Homecoming
Weekend 2018:
October 18-21*

Be sure to be kept informed
about homecoming activities
by updating your email address
with the Alumni Office at
alumni@avila.edu, and following
the Avila University Alumni
Association on Facebook.

Avila.edu/Homecoming

Save the date and plan on
returning to campus for a fun-filled Homecoming

Weekend! Activities include the Heritage Day Luncheon, Athletics Hall of Fame induction, Dinner Theatre, Alumni Awards presentations, theatre performances and athletics games. The classes of **1948, 1953, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1973** and **1978** will also be celebrating milestone reunions. Nursing, athletics, performing arts and campus ministry alumni will have special reunions. Alumni and their families from the College of St. Teresa, Avila College and Avila University are all invited to help us celebrate Homecoming Weekend!